MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN

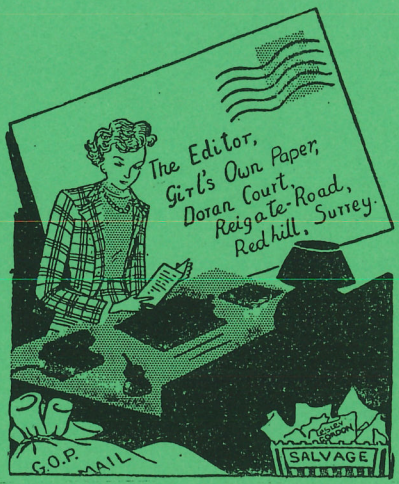
FAIRYTALES

IN the SUPERMARKET

YES, BEAUTIFUL QUALITY... AT NEW REDUCED PRICES!

now only

$3 ea



P O Box 4, Enmore NSW 2042, Aust
eternalproject.wordpress.com
eternalproject@gmail.com

Hello,

I recently discovered that, owing to some research department somewhere finding my masters proposal worthy of funding, I won't have to work for a while. This has led me to reflect on the last decade of my life, a large portion of which has been spent behind a counter. I completely ripped off this idea from a post on a blog called BEYOND THE iMPLODE, which you can read at seagullscreamingkillherkillher. blogspot.com. It's funnier and less long winded than what follows.

So, this is my kiss off to a decade of shitty jobs. I dedicate it to Tim who has put up with me telling these stories, and whinging in general, for a long time, and to the memory of Thomas Cullen Davidson who taught me not to go with the flow and whom I miss so much.

Thanks for your attention.

A is for ANNOYING FRIENDS

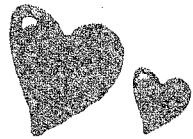
Seeing a friend at work is always horribly disconcerting. They seem out of context and you get a heightened feeling of being out of context yourself. Unless you're blessed enough to have a job that is not completely pointless or morally repugnant, work and the rest of your life should be kept as separate as possible. There's no point in working a monkey job if you can't walk out the door and forget about it completely at the end of your shift (unless you plan on writing a long and tedious zine about it). Likewise, your everyday self should not go through the door the other way. If these two worlds cross you're in trouble. The terrible knowledge that every moment you spend at work is a *big fat waste of your precious and limited time on Earth* will come crushing down on you, and living with that knowledge would be fantastically depressing. See **W**.

B is for BRAS and THE BOOT

My first job at what was then called Woolworths Metro (Woolworths' idea for catering for inner city types was to re-brand their flagship store on George St, where I worked, and to open a few others in the inner suburbs with higher prices than any other Woolworths store in Australia) was on the 1st floor which used to be the clothing and underwear department, so the bulk of my time was taken up with trying to figure out how to fold enormous flesh coloured **BRASSIERES** to the satisfaction of their new owners who, clearly, had never been satisfied with anything. This particular Woolworths was still sort of set up like a proper department store, with a lay-by facility and staff employed to wander about and serve people. Of course no one actually needs or *wants* personal service when they're shopping at Woolworths, so seeing 'Floor Staff' written beside your name on the roster was always something to be excited and a little cautious about. Excited because it meant you didn't have to spend hours standing in one spot behind the register, cautious because although, as we've already noted, no one actually wants to be served while they're in Woolies, it's still important to *look* like you're doing something (this is a good general rule for any workplace) for the benefit of the arch weirdoes employed to spy on you from the security room on the top floor, which means sort of hovering in the vicinity of shoppers and not finding a quiet corner behind a rack of plus-size trackies and spending your entire shift there reading underwear catalogues, which is what one guy did for about two weeks before he was discovered and given **THE BOOT**. **B** is also for **BOMB PARANOIA**, see entry for **TOWN HALL STATION**

C is for CARD MINE, CLOWN and CREEPY MEN (see also JUST FUCK OFF)

CARD MINE being the card shop I worked at, near **TOWN HALL STATION**. So called because of its location underground and proximity to trains, leading to inhalation of mysterious train dust that makes your snot black. I've been advised not to name the proprietor of the card mine, so I'll just call her Bounderby, after the character in *Hard Times*: all hot air, bluster and overbearing self-righteous pomposity. Remove the wacky cat-eyed glasses and pop her in some pinstriped trousers and you'd think she'd deliberately modelled herself on a c.19th caricature of an evil capitalist, stuffing her shirt and pockets with ill-gotten gains, girth hideously swollen from eating orphans. Physical resemblances aside, she also possessed that curious old-world paternalism which meant that no matter how hard she screwed you it would be with the indefatigable air of it being *with your best interests at heart*. I have cut your hours this week because *you need a break*. I have removed the chair from the desk where you work because *it gets in your way*. I pay some of my staff well below the minimum wage because *depriving them of income will help them manage their weight problems* et cetera...



A **CLOWN** was the first person to ever proposition me at work. At first I didn't know he was a clown. Actually, I thought he was a miner, because he was smeared in the remnants of what I guessed was coal dust, and he tried to win my heart with a small, interesting stone, which, I reasoned, he may have found while he was working down below. You see, it's quite boring, working at Woolworths, and I'd temporarily forgotten that I was in the middle of Sydney, a city notable for many things, but not for its coal mines, because it doesn't have any. Anyway, he didn't seem too weird or anything, despite being a bit smudged with a bluish-black substance and proffering a small rock as a token of his affections. I declined his offer to meet with him and he looked quietly heartbroken and I felt genuinely horrible. A week or so later I bumped into the big boss of the store, who wasn't actually a bad sort, for a big boss. When he saw me he laughed, which put me off, because I generally don't like it when people find me amusing, unless I'm trying to be, and I wasn't. But, it transpired, he only laughed at the recollection that he had in his possession a small rock, which had been entrusted to

him to give to me. 'Do you have many friends in the circus?' he asked. Baffled, I told him that no, I am not in fact acquainted with any circus performers (this was a while ago. I've since worked with a very talented trapeze artist). Turns out that the 'friend' was my coal miner beau, who was not a coal miner at all, but a clown, as we've already established, and who'd come into the store wearing his full costume (including big floppy shoes and a pair of hooped trousers held up with colourful braces) a few weeks before I'd declined him, asking for me by name (which he'd read on my name badge) and, when he couldn't find me, asked my boss to pass on the rock for him. And what I thought might be coal dust was actually face paint. Of course! I still sometimes wonder what my life would have been like if I'd accepted his invitation.

You encounter a lot of **CREEPY MEN** while working as a checkout chick. They take advantage of the fact that you can't run away from them, as any other woman would. The creepiest I met asked me out to dinner while offering me a rose. This wouldn't be too creepy in itself (actually, it would. Who the hell does that?), if he hadn't already told me, in a few encounters over about a three month period, that I was about the same age as his daughter and that I reminded him a lot of someone he'd 'once known' called Texas, which is what he tended to call me. He reminded me a lot of a high school teacher, for some reason. He had the same sort of air about him of broken spirits and thwarted ideals that some teachers have. When I declined his offer of dinner he made an exaggerated play of it all being 'entirely innocent' and that he simply wanted some 'intelligent company' and then accused me of 'Victorian prudery'. At the time I was an 18 year old and still very much socially and emotionally inept. Despite my inexperience I saw something inherently fucked in his behaviour and prayed that he'd never come back, which, thankfully, he didn't. A lover spurned, or whatever. Creep.

D is for DIARRHOEA ATTACK

What happens if you eat dodgy pasta that's been sitting in a bain-marie from early in the morning at about 4 in the afternoon. I was unwise enough to do just that on my first solo shift at the **SOCK DRAWER** (see **K**). The store was set up as a bunch of stalls that were pulled behind a big metal curtain thing at the end of the night. Closing the shop was a complicated procedure and not something you could really do in a hurry in the best of circumstances, let alone when you could feel a **DIARRHOEA ATTACK** coming on. I had to ask the girl minding the book stall nearby if she wouldn't mind keeping an eye out for the till and then legged it to the toilet, praying that she wouldn't rob it herself (the till, not the toilet). She didn't, and from then on if we were working at the same time we'd take it in turns to mind each others' stall if we felt like having a wander.

E is for END OF THE SHIFT

A very good thing.

F is for FRIDAY NIGHT

Not a good thing if you work on Saturday morning. For a while I worked the 6 o'clock start at Woolies on a Saturday, which was hard. I won't deny it, sometimes I cried. Much as I'd like to rise with the sun, greet the morning and all that dippy shit, I can't. I'm a sleep monster. Bed is my friend. So it was a difficult shift for me to get to. The upshot was that I saw some pretty funny stuff, or at least stuff you don't see outside the wee hours, courtesy of the legions all over the city still going on remnants of Friday night's funny pills and alcopops. Two such girls armed themselves with shopping baskets and proceeded to fill one with cucumbers, hairy melons, big salamis, bananas, carrots, rolls of chub dog food and pre-mixed cookie dough from the fridges, anything, you understand, in the shape of a phallus. The other basket was filled with an entire shelf worth of condoms and lube. When they couldn't carry anymore they brought all of their suggestive purchases to the cash register then legged it out of the store, tripping over each other in mirth.

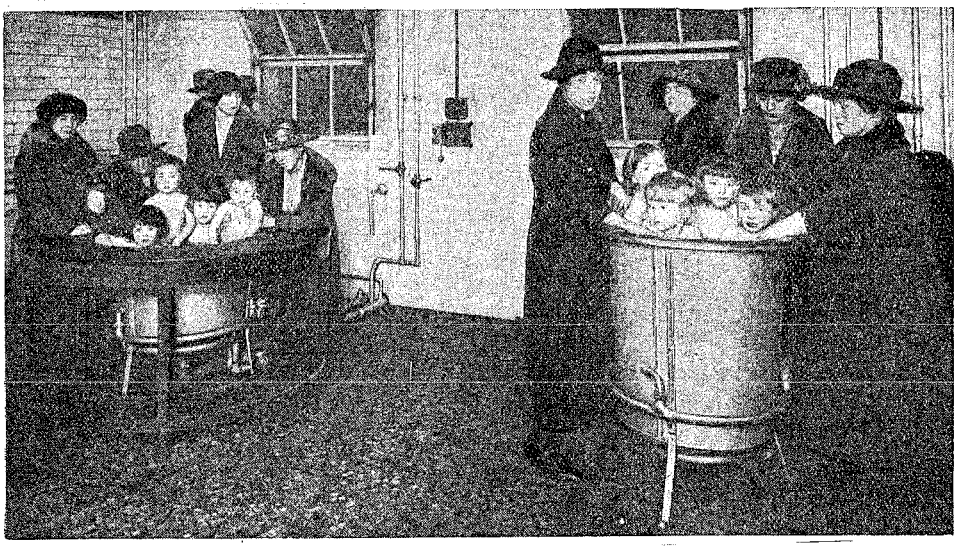
G is for GUNG HO SECURITY GUARD

I hadn't been aware that there were undercover security guards in Woolworths until I saw one of them just about dislocate a guy's arm while in the process of apprehending him. I have nothing against security guards in general. My boyfriend used to be one and it's a shit job. He used to have to work 24 hour shifts and do other crazy things, like spend all night in a tent minding iced tea and water for a corporate fun run. But this undercover guard at Woolies was just mental. I've never seen someone get so angry over something that, ultimately, didn't affect him, outside of cops beating up protesters (or cops beating up anyone, for that matter). He and the uniformed guards accosted this weedy, nervous looking guy as he was leaving the shop, grabbed him by the back of the head and by one arm, and from the look of pure hate in the plain-clothed guard's eyes you could tell that if there had been a wall in front of them he would have smashed the would-be shoplifter's brains out against it. The guy was terrified and pleading with the guard not to hurt him, gripping the doorframe with one hand out of fear, I suppose, that he was about to be dragged to the loading dock, wrist locked and beaten with assorted groceries and worse. All this was happening inches from where I was standing and I (and the other guards, eventually) was screaming for macho man to let go and leave the guy alone. Eventually the real cops showed up and took him away, and I don't know what happened after that. It goes without saying, and I know that the apprehension of shoplifters is more about upholding an idea about private property than actually saving Woolies any money, but was all of that really necessary for a packet of AA batteries?

Sure that security had just seen her stuffing the cashew nut bar down her bra, Betty legged it.

H is for HEALTH AND BEAUTY DEPARTMENT

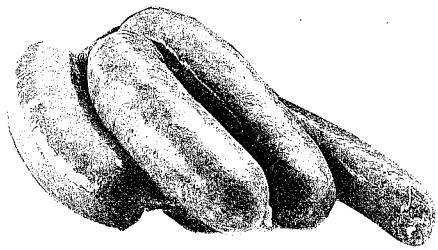
Where all of the make up, bathroom stuff and vitamin pills were kept at Woolies. A woman once asked me to help her choose some vitamins (because, you know, I'm a pharmacist). 'What's wrong with you?' I asked. 'Oh, nothing in particular, I'm just on a health kick and thought I'd just get some stuff that's generally, I don't know, healthy.' 'In that case' I told her 'I'd recommend going downstairs to the fruit and veg section. This stuff's all snake oil, anyway.' 'Oh, thanks!' Over the years I've developed some pretty mean anti-sales techniques, talking all kinds of people out of buying all kinds of stuff they don't need (scented socks, anyone?). See **USELESS JUNK.**



The many chefs of Mrs Bounderby's kitchen demonstrate how to correctly prepare orphans for the pot (see CARD MINE).

I is for INDOCTRINATION

They called it induction, but let's be honest here. All workplaces want you to feel that your crappy job is the most important thing in the world, but few go to the trouble that Woolworths does to make you 'a part of the team'. Once a simple OH&S rundown and ceremonial signing of your SDA membership, joining Woolworths is now like becoming a member of a full blown cult, and they make you do all kinds of weird shit before you're deemed ready to serve their loyal customers. When I first started working at Woolworths there wasn't much to joining, which made sense, as there wasn't much to the job in general. To train, you went through the aforementioned box lifting and union joining trial and that was it. Then they started with the vegetable quizes. One of the proudest moments in my working life was hearing my supervisor tell the store manager that I, Emma, 'really knew her vegetables', with a score of 9 out of 10 in the vegetable quiz (I mistook a swede for a turnip - damn, damn, damn!). Then came the store tours (which, funnily, were conducted by my uncle. Okay, I even needed nepotism to get a job as a checkout chick at Woolies). Here we were shown how to tell an ordinary tomato from a vine grown tomato that had been de-stalked to make it *look* like an ordinary tomato: wo-ho-ho! Just you try pulling any fruit counterfeiting on me, buster! I can spot a vine-ripened tomato masquerading as an everyday tomato from a mile away. Equipped with this powerful new knowledge we were allowed to return to the tills, but not for long, because Woolworths was busy re-asserting their right to call themselves The Fresh Food People and we were to be at the front line of the campaign, because we, the checkout chicks, were the most important people in the Woolworths Story: The Face of Woolworths. It was all down to us to be the fastest, friendliest cashiers in the world, and to show us how we were going to do it we had Michael. Michael had worked his way up from night filler to Night Captain and was now responsible for pressing the buttons on the VCR that was playing our new training video, and to say a few words that were meant to inspire us to return to work with an intensified desire to scan barcodes and weigh fruit. Michael didn't like me very much, because my uncle was his superior and my brother had previously worked the night shift and had called Michael on his shit for yelling obscenities at women who walked past the security entrance. Anyway. I can't remember how long



this new training regime went on for but my, was it trying. We were asked what we got out of working at Woolworths (a little bit of money), what we should get out of working at Woolworths (nothing less than the completely integrated feeling of being an indispensable part of the world's greatest supermarket chain, and, a little bit of money), were plied with bruised apples and Caramelo Koalas, were forced to sit though many minutes of hokey videos explaining how Woolworth's produce comes from FARMS, grown by HAPPY FARMERS who LOVE WOOLWORTHS as much as we should, how all of the men and women working in the Woolworth's supply chain - from the trucking companies to the distribution warehouses to the corporate offices - are all ONE BIG FAMILY: LOVE YOUR FAMILY, LOVE WOOLWORTHS. And then Michael played us a song, and invited us to sing along, or, if we preferred, to sit in silent contemplation of the lyrics, which went something like this

AUSTRALIA!!! OOOOO!!
WOOLWORTHS! AUSTRALIA! OOOOO!!
FRESH FOOD PEOPLE! (AUSTRALIAN!!!)
WE'RE WOOLWORTHS!
THE FRESH FOOD PEOPLE!
AUSTRALIA!! OOOOO!!
WOOLWORTHS!!!

Which, I believe, if you play it backwards, says: YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SHOP WITH US, WORK FOR US AND BEND TO OUR EVERY PERVERTED WHIM, YOU WORTHLESS, MAGGOTY PEASANTS.

J is for JUST FUCK OFF

I'm usually a reticent, mild mannered person. I don't like to go out of my way to be offensive and believe that most people are alright and that it's only circumstances that might sometimes cause them to come across as mean or annoying. On the other hand, some people are just shit, and no amount of patience and understanding will change them. Unfortunately, in a work environment it can be difficult to convey adequately your desire for someone to leave you the hell alone, so you may have to lump them until they give up hassling you or you can palm them on to someone else (in itself pretty mean, but sometimes it's better to 'share the load', as Hobbits would). But rarely, oh so rarely, you get the opportunity to deal with them swiftly and decisively before they even get a chance to latch on to you properly. You don't want to waste such an opportunity if one comes your way. Here's how I did it one morning when I was running very late for work:

Creepy Man (standing next to me at lights) - Hi!

Me - (barest of acknowledging, but uninviting, nods)

C G - Where are you off to?

Me - Work.

C G - Do you want to meet me afterwards for a coffee?

Me - No.

C G - Oh, come on, there's a good place I know! Just a coffee!

Me - No.

C G - Oh, come on! I'll wait for you! Where do you live?

Me - JUST FUCK OFF.

C G (crestfallen) - I was only asking. (exit)

Now, I've heard some suggestions that the 'blank' is the best way of dealing with people that you don't want to talk to, but I disagree. I think that it is much too ambiguous and also, as others have noted, can easily be deployed accidentally against people you may rather like and had no intention of blanking, which can cause a lot of social embarrassment. More importantly, blanking's wussy. It's incredibly passive aggressive. If you're really feeling childish enough to socially isolate someone a good solid JUST FUCK OFF is by far your most effective option, won't be misinterpreted by anyone and will leave no one in doubt of how hard you are, just in case they were thinking of bothering you as well. Also, no matter what anyone tries to tell you, it feels good to swear.

$19.99
$19.99
eq.
$24.99

K is for KIM and KLEPTOMANIA

Kim being the manager of the Sock Drawer, a shop that used to be located on the ground floor of Darling Harbour's monstrous Harbourside complex. The shop was owned by Canberra based sock entrepreneur and complete moron Tom... dammit I can't remember his surname but it was something mildly amusing like Gitt or Cack or some other euphemism for a rude bit or bodily function. Anyway, Kim was a complete mental case (note that I say this as someone with a colourful family history of acute and chronic mental illness so I know what I'm talking about) and if I let myself I feel a bit sorry for her, so I'll ignore her personal story and anything that might evoke your sympathies and go straight for the craziness. First: **Sock Dusting**. The sock shop was not a particularly popular destination for the hip crowd or anyone else and as such we, the three suckers who worked there (who were employed under the directives of a special contract of Tom Bog's own creation, which was not legally binding in any way whatsoever, but printed on a special letterhead so I think he probably thought that it was), had a lot of time on our hands, which was strictly broken down into minutes on a work sheet which we all had to fill out and sign every day to indicate that we'd completed the various complex tasks set for us. Mostly this involved sock dusting: using pieces of sticky-tape to remove the accumulated dust from the socks that no one ever bought. Because this task was performed every day I thought I'd try living on the wild side and skip it for just one day so there'd be a more satisfying build up of dust for me to clean the day after (thrill!) and, dammit, KIM KNEW. I mean she actually knew that I hadn't dusted that day, and I know that she knew because she wrote it down in her **Secret Book.** Her secret book was actually the diary that the rosters were written in. I suppose it was more like a **Secret Page** than a secret book. This page, inexplicably, had a postcard sticky-taped to it. The tape had obviously been cut and re-applied many, many times and, being a super-sleuth (a very, very bored super-sleuth) I decided to investigate this strange anomaly and removed the tape myself, to discover a list, written in pencil, of EVERYTHING I HAD EVER DONE WRONG WHILE WORKING AT THE SOCK SHOP. Including not dusting socks, not getting down on my worthless hands and knees to clean the floor properly, wearing inappropriate clothes, not greeting customers with a sufficient degree of enthusiastic fervour. To this day I do not know the purpose of the list, whether Kim was saving it all up to spring on me at once or if it was just her special way of dealing with how much she hated me. We'll never know. There was more Kim craziness, but thankfully the shop closed down to make way for Harbourside renovations and I only worked there for about 6 months or so, maybe less.

KLEPTOMANIA refers to a condition that I have solely in situ of the places that I work and that steadily builds over the time that I work there. I don't want to elaborate too much because for all I know my former employers are spying on me, but boy, have I ripped some stuff off from my jobs. It is, I believe, a moral duty which, if you pay attention to the underlying theme of this zine (i.e. work's shit), shouldn't require any elaboration. The most difficult place to steal from, in my opinion, is Woolworths. I don't know how you punks do it, I really don't. One minute you're just standing there, the next a whole shop full of vegan goodies have hurled themselves into your pockets and undies without anyone noticing or with you even moving, apparently. You waddle out of the shop with the gait of someone whose just cacked his or her pants and no one gives you a first let alone second glance. And this with you openly sporting a t-shirt that reads 'steal, don't starve' or 'I love shoplifting and that's no lie!' The only time I gave in to the almost irresistible urge to nick stuff while I was at Woolies was one Easter when a box of Cadbury Cream Eggs on the counter became too much to bare and I snaffled one faster than David Irving denies the Holocaust. See also **SHOPLIFTING/SHOPLIFTERS.**

L is for LATE FOR WORK

Which I usually was. Only really a problem at a place like Woolworths, where they have finger scanners - like the type they use in prisons - to clock you on and off. You were paid in blocks of 15 minutes, so even if you were only late five minutes they'd dock you the full 15. They'd probably negotiated that with the SDA in return for, I don't know, an extra minute to return to the till from a tea break. Bastards.

M is for MUSIC

In my last job the only music I got to hear while working was whatever wafted over from the handbag shop opposite, which was not only bad but repetitively so. I don't know how the hell they chose what to play, but whoever did it seemed unable to make a compilation of anything longer than six songs, from a record collection that must have been comprised of at least one-sixth ABBA albums. 'No one blasts ABBA like the hand bag shop', one of our staff noted before locking herself safely in the back room. I tell you now that it takes only three plays of *Waterloo* before you well and truly wish that you were dead, or deaf. See how nice I am! Now you don't have to try it!

N is for NUN

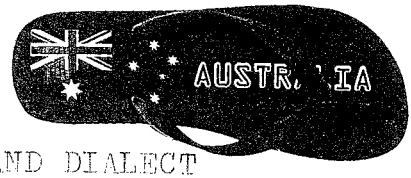
This one old nun would always come into Woolies, buy no-brand tuna and crackers and rant at us for a while. She seemed feeble enough, carried a walking stick and wore thick glasses, but damn, she knew the sound of a two-dollar coin when one hit the ground. I once saw her put her foot over one that someone else dropped, waited for them to leave, then picked it up and put it in her pocket. I didn't know that habits have pockets, but there you go.

O is for OLD PEOPLE

Old people, like most people, are generally okay. This list has become something of a catalogue of bitterness, so while I can think of numerous occasions where I've encountered crotchety old biddies with mega chips on their huddled shoulders, I'll give them an amnesty and tell you instead of one old lady who, when she came into Woolies, generally made my day better rather than worse. She came to our store regularly to steal rockmelons. She was the most brazen thief I've ever met - walked in with two empty canvas bags and out with the same bags each containing a rockmelon, which, if questioned, she would repeatedly claim to have 'bought somewhere else'. I tried arguing with her the first time - 'actually, I'm pretty sure that you didn't have those when you came in' - but then two words, two very important words to learn when you work in retail, formed themselves in my mind: *Who cares.* Rockmelon lady continued to nick rockmelons well into the summer, and when they were out of season I'm sure she moved onto other fruit, and I doubt that there was anyone who could have stopped her.

OLD PERSON brazenly stealing a shop employee who has fallen asleep at work. 'This'll match the one I found last week.'

3.93
ea
2 kg Bag



P is for PRONUNCIATION AND DIALECT

Until I worked at Woolworths I wasn't ever conscious that I have an accent or that I pronounce certain words in a way that other people might find amusing or offensive. Turns out that I do.

Working at the smoke shop at Woolies, Man orders cigarettes, provides payment. I complete the transaction in the usual way:

Me - There you go, and twenny cents change.

Man (smirking) - Twenny?

Me - Yes. Twenny...(I practice saying 'twenty' a few times). It sort of feels more natural to say 'Twenny'.

Man (smirking, condescending bastard) - Well, *I* would say twen*T*y. (exit)

Me (to self) - Dick*H*ead.

On another occasion, same location, the queue's a bit disorderly and I'm unsure as to who's waiting to be served and who's not:

Me (to Man) - Excuse me, Sir, are you 'right there?

Man (astonished) - Am I... ''*right*'?

Me - Um, yes, I mean, are you okay there? Are you waiting to be served?

Man (incredulous) - Am I 'okay'? Am I ''right'? Am I waiting to be served? No, I am not! (Exits, repeating loudly my outlandish questioning of his *correctness*, or otherwise.)

Me (to self) - I'd have thought that 'are you 'right', in this setting, is a pretty common informal substitute for 'may I help you', one which I and countless others use throughout the day to the ire of none. So, I can only assume that your problem with my using it now is because you enjoy belittling people who are in no position to answer back to you, because you're a smarmy fucker whose wife makes you wait at the door of Woolies while she buys the groceries to make your dinner, and you pretend to be annoyed that you have to stand there, waiting, but you secretly enjoy it because it gives you a chance to perve on the checkout chicks and perhaps, if you're lucky, to humiliate them, which, let's face it, gives you a sex thrill. And if you weren't waiting to be served, why were you standing in the queue, dickhead?

Q is for QUESTIONS

Which you get a lot of, obviously, some dafter than others. One woman held up a pencil topped with a representation of an Australian marsupial fashioned from wire and bristle (such as the type that old scrub brushes are made of.)

Woman - This is interesting, isn't it? What's it made of, a sponge?

Me - Er, no, it's not sponge. I think that it's bristle, such as old scrub brushes are made of.

Woman (eyes threatening to shoot death rays if I did not agree with her) - Which is what a sponge is.

Me - Er, whatever you say (to self: YOU DOLT.)

If you work in retail you've probably learned by now that there is absolutely no point in arguing with a customer about anything. Disheartening though it seems, and as much as you may feel the urge to seriously put someone straight (a brush is not a sponge! a brush is not a sponge! for heaven's sake!), take a deep breath, smile graciously while agreeing with you customer's outlandish blathering (a brush is not a sponge!) and ask if there's any other way that you might assist them. You cannot right the wrongs of the world from behind the counter, and what's more, you really don't get paid enough to get stressed about some idiot's inability to correctly identify cleaning textiles. Instead take your troubles home with you and compose a long and tedious zine from them. You could write about the time when you were at Woolies and an old lady made the trouble of returning to the counter after she'd made her purchases to inquire whether it was store policy for Woolworth's staff not to smile when they were serving people? Augh! *fuck off, fuck off, fuck off...*

SHOP EMPLOYEE gently breaking the wrist of a customer who insists on calling a snow dome a snow cone. 'That's a type of iced confection, you dunderhead'.

R is for RUDENESS

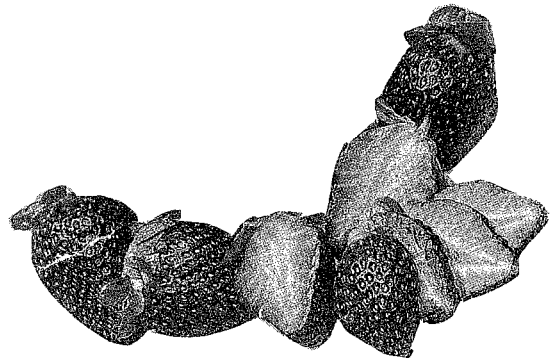
If a checkout chick or shop assistant has ever treated you rudely I hope that you didn't take it as personally as the aforementioned old bag. Chances are the person serving you had been working for eight hours (or eight years) behind a till or wandering about the shop floor in the manner of someone lost in the wilderness and their brain had disintegrated from the utter horror of it causing them to temporarily lose their social skills and basic awareness of what was happening around them. On the other hand, you may have behaved like a total git and were completely deserving of their contempt. Consider, for instance, that the person behind the till has no authority whatsoever to perform refunds or resolve any problems you may have with your purchases, so you probably shouldn't take it out on them when things go wrong. Also, interrupting someone when they are in the middle of performing another transaction is rude. So is shoving purchases/money in their face when they are clearly in the process of performing some other necessary/temporary activity, like polishing their glasses or taking a sip of water. So is putting money on the counter when they have their hand out to collect it from you. So is getting grumpy when they put something in a bag when you didn't tell them not to. So is getting grumpy when someone fails to notice that you are waiting to be served when you have given no indication that you actually require service, or you knock on the counter to get their attention: the words 'excuse me' were invented for this precise situation (amazing!) et cetera et cetera...

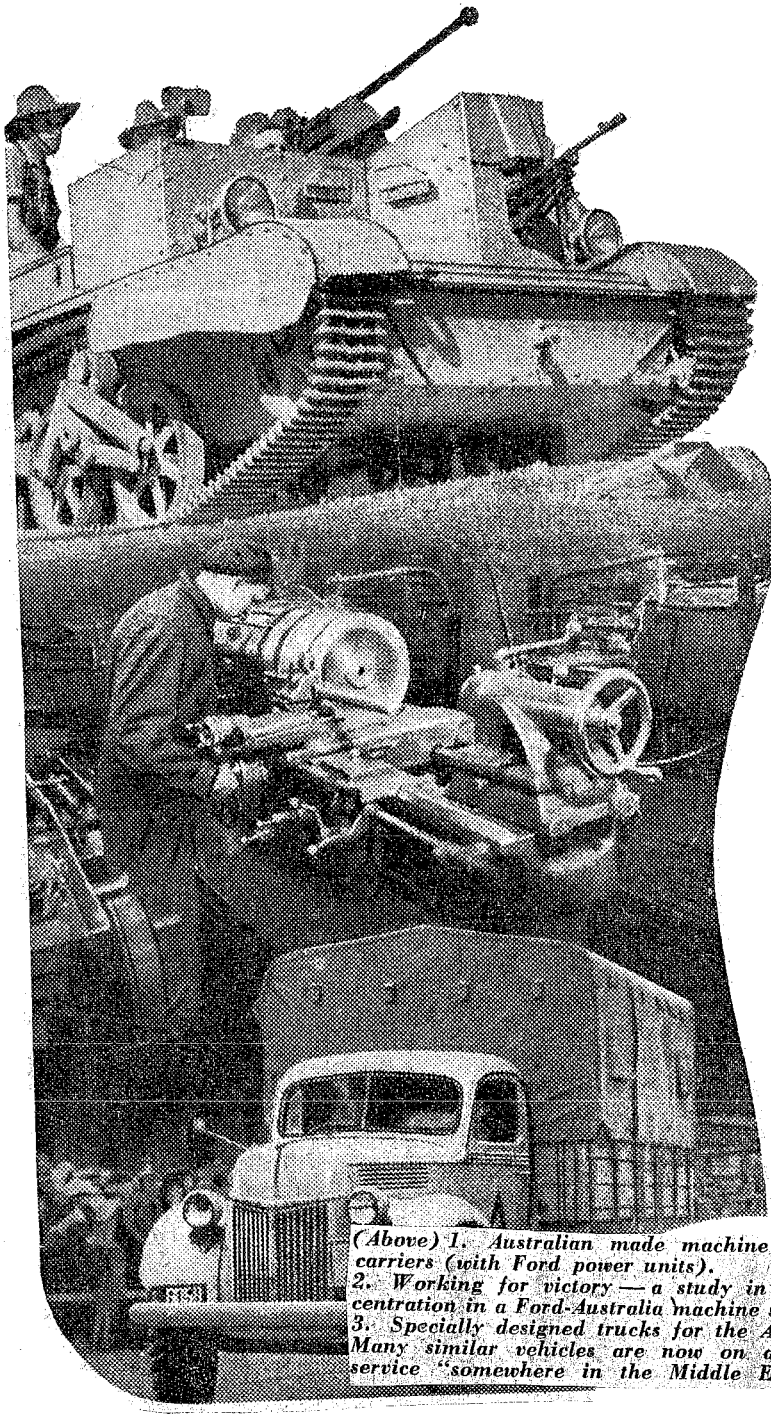
SHOP EMPLOYEE
demonstrating
a non-verbal
JUST FUCK OFF

S is for SHOPLIFTING/SHOPLIFTERS

As we've already seen, although I have a predilection, nay, *compulsion* to steal from my employers, I'm no good at shoplifting in general. Living on the outer periphery of a sort or anarchist/diy community, I've often been made to feel guilty for buying stuff that other, more finger-smithy friends would pocket as if it were already theirs (which, I suppose, it is). Even something as simple and, well, *cheap*, as a loaf of bread is enough to provoke the disapproval of some people if they discover that you bought it rather than fished it out of a dumpster. But you know, as much as I admire the moral idea of dumpstering and shoplifting (and admire those who engage in these activities), and as much as I would like to thwart capitalism in whatever small ways that I can, it's difficult for me, you see, because I'm *cursed*. I think it has to do with being a nervous individual in general: I just can't assume the air of nonchalance that's required for the level of subterfuge necessary to steal a loaf of bread. I would be caught and thrown into prison and that would be that. An example. A girl that I once lived with hooked up with a punk girl and, basically, fell in love with her, wanted to be exactly like her, and this included wanting to predominantly steal food and groceries rather than pay for them. A noble idea, as we've already stated. See, she (the punk girl) was the sort of person who'd say 'let's get something to eat' and while we innocents queued up at Bi-Lo to pay for our Curly Wurlys and Milky Ways, Little Miss Five Finger Discount would wander casually outside, and when we inquired after her purchases she'd pull a packet of Oreos out of her knickers and makes us all feel really, really, lame. Like we just sold out the revolution because we buy our sugary treats rather than giving ourselves Oreo boners (and they weren't even *vegan* sugary treats.) So, having seen the light, my infatuated flat mate swore to amend this wrong by becoming a shoplifter extraordinaire, but, having never swiped anything in her life, invited me along (possibly to pin the blame on if she got caught). Half an hour later we were in aisle 6 at (pre-renovation) Broadway Coles and Flatty was putting some hairclips into her pocket: something small to begin with. Two minutes later we were stopped by security on the way out: 'you have hairclips in your pocket. Come with me'. It felt so... *inevitable*. Who the hell were we trying to kid? We can't even steal *hairclips*. We don't even frigging *want* hairclips. 'Do you want me to come with you?' I asked Flatty. 'I'll be okay'. We were almost laughing,

actually. The guy in the security room was nice, apparently. He told Flatty that it was mostly people nicking chocolate bars that he nabbed. 'I have to ban you from the centre for 3 months.' He took her photo and we went home to Abercrombie Street. So, next time you see me walking down the street, hands full of groceries that I patently bought, please don't make me feel guilty about it. I feel lame enough as it is. If, on the other hand, I still worked in retail, I would happily aid and abet any attempts you made at shoplifting in my store. It's much easier to white ant than to shoplift. Many friends that I served at Woolworths, for instance, walked away with things I'd only pretended to scan or bonus cigarettes and batteries. You could rig the scales to weigh fruit and veg to the advantage/disadvantage of the customer, depending on whether you liked them or not. One of the few pleasures of working at Woolworths was serving someone who was worried that they wouldn't have enough money for their purchases and the look on their face as they realised that their groceries were going to cost them *a lot* less than they'd expected, thanks to me. Okay, yes. It made me feel powerful. Small power for a checkout chick.





(Above) 1. Australian made machine gun carriers (with Ford power units).
2. Working for victory — a study in concentration in a Ford-Australia machine shop.
3. Specially designed trucks for the Army. Many similar vehicles are now on active service "somewhere in the Middle East."

T is for TOWN HALL STATION

The station nearest all of the jobs I've had in the city. You could feel the trains moving beneath you when you were on the counter at the card mine, which was very disquieting. As already noted, black train dust would be inhaled and adhered to the walls of your nostrils during a long shift in the card mine or on the lower ground floor of Woolworths. After September 11 there was a spate of security and alarm drills as authorities calculated that if Sydney were to become the target of a similar terrorist attack then Town Hall Station, with it's long and crowded thoroughfares spooling off in all directions, would be the place for it to happen. For a while I was gripped with **BOMB PARANOIA**, as paranoia in the general population mounted, with calls for people to spy on each other and constant assurances that our lives were in danger and the imminence of a war somewhere, with anyone. My biggest fear was not being killed so much as *being killed at work*. The terror that some pit beneath Town Hall would be my final resting place and that I'd be written up in tabloid memorials and death lists as a proud employee of a store that predominantly sold cards that would be thrown away shortly after they were received; mawkish, sentimental gifts and greetings for a society shucked of any way of expressing itself outside of buying and selling teddy bears and plastic love hearts and other clumsy, bastardised symbols of human emotions and lives. My official obituary would read that I'd died defending Our Way of Life and that I dutifully turned up to work despite the terrible danger posed by those who would wish to harm us, not that I had any choice. And it would be accompanied by a copy of an old school portrait, which they'd obtain from someone I'd gone to school with but hadn't spoken to in nearly a decade, a photo in which I'm not wearing the correct uniform because we could never afford it, and I'm not smiling because I never felt like it, and that's how I'd be remembered, briefly, and then forgotten, by everyone, for ever.

U is for USELESS JUNK

Well, most stuff is useless, but working in a shop you begin to appreciate *how* useless, and *wastefully* useless at that. The card mine in particular showed me a whole level of shitty junk that I didn't even know existed (or was required) in the world. It could have been called *Shitty Useless Junk Shop* and people would still have come in their hoards to suck it all up. You people, why? And the inevitable question: 'Is it made in China?' *It's a fucking faux-ceramic pig with a wood veneer finish that splits open in the middle so you can serve teacakes from it and it's going to cost you $6.95. Of course it's made in China, you nonce.* Then the disdain. 'Oh. It's made in *China*. I thought that it was *Royal Dalton*. Oh.' *But you'll take it?* 'Oh yes, I'll take it. Does it have a box?' Why is everybody so surprised to find that everything is made in China? I asked someone once, when they complained about 'everything being made in China': *Well, you believe in the free market, don't you?* Shut them right up.

V is for QUEEN VICTORIA, STATUE OF

Located opposite Town Hall, so I've walked past it just about every day of my working life. Always brings to mind a lyric from *City Hobgoblins*, a song by The Fall: 'Queen Victoria is a large black slug in Piccadilly, Manchester.' Huge statues of famous people are always intimidating, but VR is particularly so because she was already so *substantial*. 'Great in every way', as someone once commented while examining a pair of her knickers. Opposite the statue of VR is a wishing well presided over by a statue of her dog, Islay, who, due to his performing many good deeds, we're told, *has been given the power of speech.* Oddly, Islay sounds exactly like John Laws. I spent many lunch times in the staff canteen at Woolies listening to the distant sound of John Laws barking, which brought some disturbing images to mind, ones that I'm too ashamed to describe here.

W is for WHY WORK IN A SHOP THEN, YOU NINNY?

So, by this point you're probably wondering why I've continued to work in such terminally shitty jobs for so long, given how obviously horrific I find them. It's a good question, and not one that I can easily answer. First of all, the main condition that I have for a job is that I have enough time outside of work to attend to the things that I want to do, like diddle about for hours writing zines that no one will read while digitising my frankly quite impressive record collection. This tactic would seem to have paid off, given that I've now got this money to study a masters in visual arts. I would never have been able to pad out my scholarship application with so many lies and exaggerations if I'd been working full time. But there's more to it than that. Putting aside my obvious personality flaws, that I'm generally unfriendly, solitary, unambitious and uninterested in most of what seems to captivate the rest of the world, I'm surely still capable of getting a part time job somewhere slightly more stimulating than a shop, aren't I? This is where my problem lies. I could get a job in an office, in some 'creative' industry as so many of my friends have, but frankly, why would I want to? A person who works in an office could compose a far greater catalogue of work complaints than I ever could. I can't think of anything more tedious than having to work somewhere where I might have to pretend to be interested or invested in what I'm doing, to 'network' and use my creative ideas for the benefit of a company that does...what, exactly? Half the time when I ask my friends to explain their jobs to me I find it incredibly boring or it just goes over my head altogether, which leads me to believe that their job is in fact entirely unnecessary and that their time would be much better spent doing something else. And then there's the inescapable fact that no one seems to actually like their job, despite it taking up all of their time and their having to work overtime and spend the rest of their lives talking about how much they hate it or looking for other, similarly boring but higher paid jobs. Now, working in a shop's terribly boring, but that's about all it is. No one has any illusions that they're doing something important or interesting, no one particularly cares, beyond a certain point, what happens in the shop. There is no feeling of propriety or responsibility. This, of course, doesn't prevent you from feeling ripped off and bitter, but better to feel that, I say, than to be oblivious to the fact that you are being

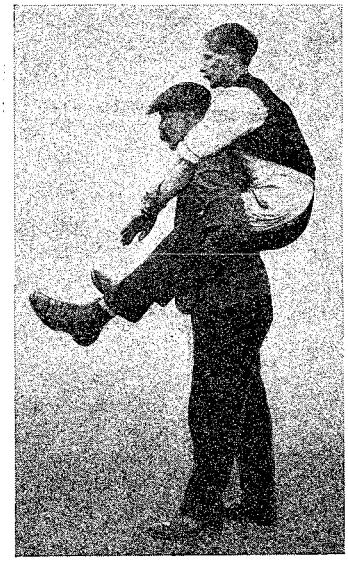
ripped off, or to know that you're being ripped off but feel tied to a job because it offers you security. As George Orwell noted in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, there is a certain satisfaction, a strange security, in knowing that you're as broke as you're ever going to get. Of course, I have no real responsibilities in life toward anyone other than myself and as such am in an extremely privileged position, and I know it's really unfair to harp on about choosing not to work, because most people in the world will never have that choice, and I know that if you have a mortgage or baby or someone in your family's ill you'll be thinking *who the hell does this scholarship girl think she is talking to us about how dumb we are for going to work?* And I know that it's not individual jobs but the nature of work, or wage slavery, in general that's really the problem here. But, if you are hating your job, and you feel like you're trapped or like you don't have enough time to do the things that you want to do, I highly recommend quitting, or getting a job that uses less of your time and energy. I had an interesting discussion a little while back with someone who worked in one of these incomprehensible office jobs and that had come to an important realisation that had led him to leave it and focus on some things that he wanted to do: No one ever got what they wanted by working on something else. The only way to be a writer is to write. The only way to be a photographer is to take photographs. The only way to overthrow capitalism is to overthrow capitalism. You can't do one thing and expect something else to come of it. That is my homely advice to you. But I will stop sermonising...NOW.

X is for X-RAY SPECS

Warrior in Woolworths became my theme song for a while. When I worked at Woolworths I'd draw comics in this little pocket sized diary I carried with me. It was called *Worrier* in Woolworths and I sort of planned to make a zine of it, but nothing ever really happened in it except this little cat that I'd figured out how to draw from one angle would sit though about 10 panels then say 'this is really boring', which would have been derided and mocked by the Zine Academy.

Y is for YAWNING and the inevitable response you get when you do it at work: 'keeping you up, are we?' One thing I really will not miss about working is the endless, repeated conversations you have with people whom you have nothing in common with other than that you work together. At the card mine, one woman in particular's brain had become so addled from working in shops that she could no longer construct sentences on the go, instead relying on a stock of phrases that she blurted out at more or less the appropriate time, less so as the day wore on and the need to have a fag became all consuming. 'Keeping you up, are we?' was one of them. Others included: 'watcha doin', floss?' (I've been informed that 'floss' is actually Geordie slang for 'idiot', but correct me if I'm wrong), 'when you come back I'll...' (uttered every time I left the shop for a wee or a wander, sometimes completed, but just as often left hanging), 'Weeeeellll' and 'nooooooow, then', 'on the money, honey', 'are you having a break at 11?' (every fucking day! Sometimes I'd go at half past, just to confuse her). As a Scouse backpacker who worked with us for a while once succinctly put it: 'That woman mithers the fuck out of me'. Ah, I feel mean now. She was actually a nice lady. She just mithered the fuck out of us.

Z is for ZAT'S ALL! At last count there were three German women working at my last job. That's what they'd say. Zere. Zee End. Guten Nacht!



SHOP EMPLOYEES demonstrate one way to celebrate the end of a long shift (or zine)

FLYING MACHINE

AVIANNE—the pseudonym of a well-known air-woman—tells you about air ferrying and the importance of air transport in post-war planning

WHEN we say 'air ferrying' we refer almost exclusively to the delivery of fanzines from the Flying Machine H.Q. in Enmore, Sydney, to your house, wherever that may be. Here are some of the fine handmade publications currently available:

By the Time You're Twenty-Five. The quarter century musings of a well-known airwoman, including rare accounts and documents from early solo flights, encounters with dogs and a bonus recipe card.

Approx A5, 28 pages, $3.50ppd.

Horace Andy and the Spanish Owls. A made in one day collaborative zine, by myself and fellow esteemed airwoman and comrade, Anwyn.

Highly recommended!

A6, 32 pages, $2.00ppd.

Raining in my Room. A made on a rainy day zine, featuring soul music and pussy cats. Recently photocopied batch was lost in doomed flight over pacific, but will be reprinted shortly.

A6, forget how many pages, 50c*.

Away with Words. A zine comprised mostly of pictures, if you're into that sort of thing. Put together whilst grounded with three complete series of Doctor Who, so a bit preoccupied with space/time travel.

A5, 24 pages, $3.00ppd.

SEE the Flying Machine online catalogue at eternalproject.wordpress.com for more details about these fanzines and others, as well as semi-regularly updated information regarding Flying Machine flights and endeavours.

* Please note that all pricing is postage paid in Australia, but I will also accept stamps or other zines or pretty much anything else that you might have for trade, including, but not limited to: mix tapes, old magazines/newspapers and street directories/road atlases/maps, clothes and knitting patterns, yarn, badges, pencils and other stationery. Anything interesting, really. Oh, and letters, of course. Write to P O Box 4, ENMORE NSW, AUSTRALIA 2042 for inquiries regarding trades or purchases.

Love,

Avianne

AVIANNE.

A UNIQUE birthday present!

Mary was away, staying with a favourite Aunt, and was returning home the day before her Birthday.

"What CAN we give her," lamented Mother, "nearly everything requires coupons."

Mary's Dad could offer no solution, but her Brother Bill had a brainwave. "Give her a permanent thrill," he suggested—"let me and Dad overhaul her bike and make it like new again with those genuine PHILLIPS replacement parts you see advertised."

* * * *

WAS Mary delighted? She now enjoys riding the equivalent of a new machine.

* * * *

So, girls, when your family asks you *what* you want for your Birthday—suggest they buy you some PHILLIPS Replacement Fitments.

Send 1d. stamp for a post-free copy of Phillips Booklet "Keep your cycle fit", showing you how.

PHILLIPS

BE NOWNED THE WORLD OVER

CYCLE FITMENTS

J. A. PHILLIPS & CO LTD, CREDENDA WORKS, BIRMINGHAM.

Good food is indispensable to good health; but it still remains that overeating may cause serious injury to the system.